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Miss Mary L. Bullard
and sister.

Manchester-by-the-Sea

Ms. Life of Josiah Hanson
written by Hon. S. A. Eliot.

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The Life Of Josiah Henson,

Formerly a Slave,
Now an inhabitant of Canada,

as
Narrated
by
Himself.

Boston.
Charles C. Little & James Brown.
1849.
Published for the author

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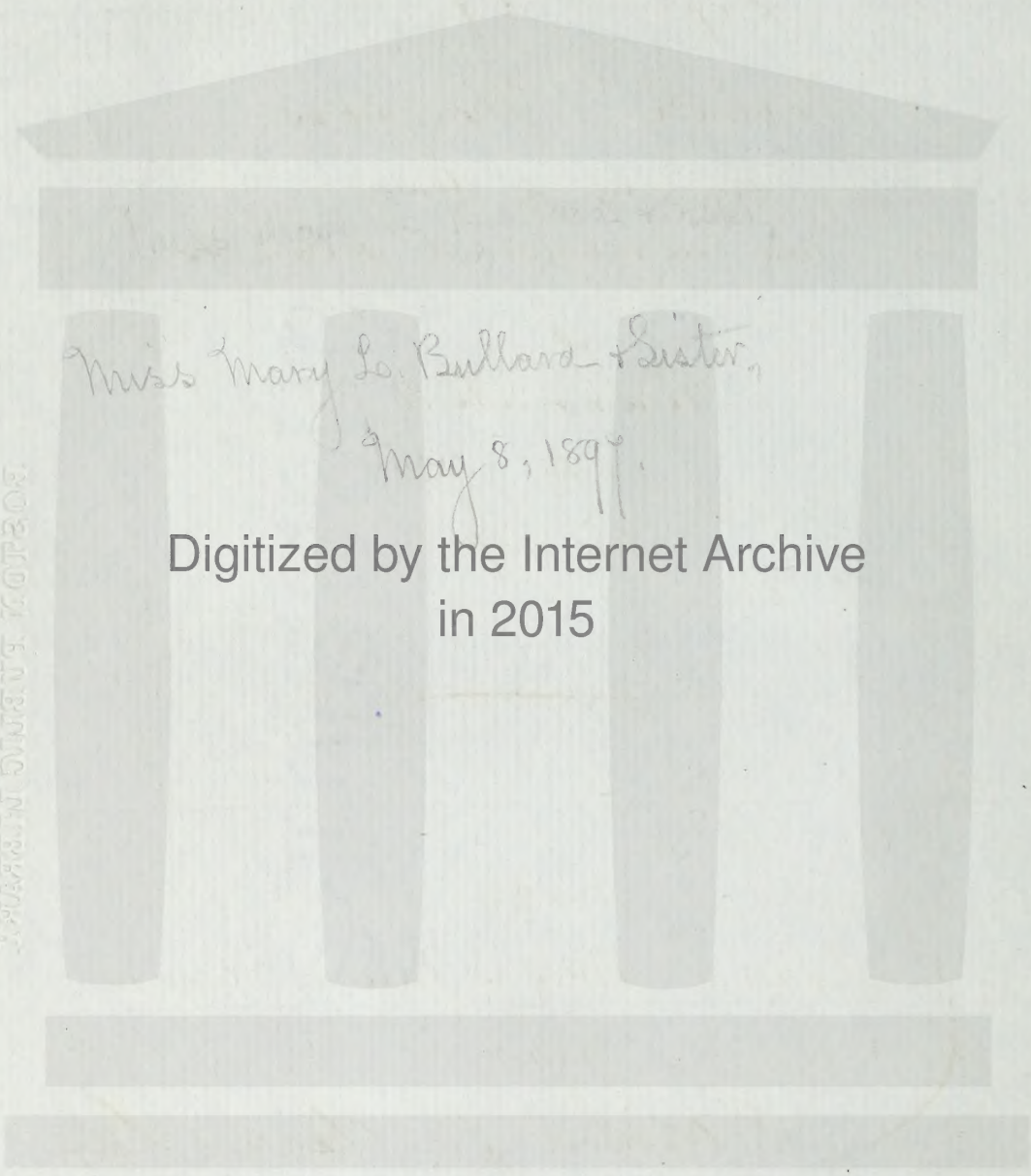

Miss Mary Lo. Bullard - Sister,

May 8, 1897.

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Advertisement.

The following memoir was written from the dictation of Josiah Henson. A portion of the story was told, which, when written, was read to him, that any errors of statement might be corrected. The substance of it, therefore, the facts, the reflections, every often the words, are his; a little more than the structure of the sentences belongs to another.

The narrative, in this form, necessarily loses the attraction derived from the earnest manner, the natural eloquence of a man who tells a story in which he is deeply interested; but it is hoped that enough remains to repay perusal, & that the character of the man, & the striking nature of the events of his life will be thought to justify the endeavor to make them more extensively known. The story has this advantage, that it is not fiction, but fact; & it will be found fruitful in instruction by those who attentively consider its lessons.

Life, &c.

I was born, June 16. 1789, in Charles County, Maryland, on a farm belonging to Mr. Francis N. about a mile from Port Tobacco. My mother was the property of Dr. Josiah McP. but was hired by Mr. N. to whom my father belonged. The only incident I can remember, which occurred while my mother continued on N.'s farm, was the appearance of my father, one day, with his head bloody, & his back lacerated. He was in a state of great excitement, though it was all a mystery to me, at the age of three or four years, it was explained at a late period, & I understood that he had been suffering the cruel penalty of the Maryland law for beating a white man. His right ear had been cut off close to his head, & he had received a hundred lashes on his back. He had beaten the overseer for a brutal assault on my mother, & this was

his punishment. Furious at such treatment, my father became a different man; & was so morose, disobedient, & intractable, ~~that~~ that Mr. N. determined to sell him. He accordingly parted with him, not long after, to his son, who lived in Alabama; & neither my mother, nor I, ever heard of him again. as I understood, afterwards, from my mother & other persons. He was naturally, a man of amiable temper, & of considerable energy of character; but it is not strange that he should be essentially changed by such cruelty & injustice, ~~as~~ under the sanction of law.

Lenfest

After the sale of my father by N. & his leaving Maryland for Alabama, Dr. McC. would no longer hire out my mother to N. She returned, therefore, to the estate of the Dr. who was very much kinder to his slaves than the generality of planters, never suffering them to be struck by any one. He was, indeed, a man of good natural impulses, kind hearted, liberal, & jovial. The latter quality was so much developed as to be his great failing; & though his convivial excesses were not thought of as a fault by the community in which he lived, & did not even prevent his having a high reputation for goodness of heart, & an almost saint-like benevolence, yet they were, nevertheless, his ruin. My mother & her young family of three girls & three boys, of which I was the youngest, resided on this estate for two or three years, during which my only recollections are of being rather a pet of the doctor's, who thought I was a bright child, & of being much impressed with what I afterwards re-

cognized as the deep piety & devotional feeling & habits of my mother. I do not know how & where she acquired her knowledge of God, or her acquaintance with the Lord's Prayer, which she so frequently repeated, & taught me to repeat. I remember seeing her often on her knees, endeavoring to arrange her thoughts in prayers appropriate to her situation, but which amounted to little more than constant ejaculation, & the repetition of short phrases which were within my infant comprehension, & have remained in my memory to this hour. IIP After this brief period of comparative comfort, however, the death of Dr. M.c P. brought about a revolution in our condition, which, common as such things are in slave countries, can never be imagined by those not subject to them, nor recollected by those who have been, without emotions of grief & indignation, deep & ineffaceable.

The Dr. was riding from one of his scenes of riotous excess, when falling from his horse in crossing a little run not a foot deep, he was unable to save himself from drowning.

In consequence of his decease it became necessary to sell the estate & the slaves, in order to divide the proceeds among the heirs, & we were all put up at auction & sold to the highest bidder, & scattered over various parts of the country. My brothers & sisters were bid off one by one, while my mother, holding my hand, looked on in an agony of grief, the cause of which I but ill understood at first, but which dawned on my mind with dreadful clearness, as the sale proceeded. My mother was torn separated from me, & put up in her turn. She was residing in Montgomery County, bought by a man named Isaac R., & then I was offered to the assembled purchasers. My mother, half distracted with the parting forever from all her children, pushed through the crowd, while the bidding for me was going on, to the spot where R. was standing. She fell at his feet, & clung to his knees, entreating him in tones that a mother only could command, to buy her baby as well as herself, & spare to her one of her little ones at least. Will it, can it

he believed that this man, thus appealed to, was capable, not merely of turning a deaf ear to her supplication, but of disengaging himself from her with such violent ~~motion~~ blows & kicks, as to reduce her to the necessity of creeping out of his reach, mingling the groan of bodily suffering with the sob of a breaking heart?

Yet this was one of my earliest observations of men; an experience which has been common to me with thousands of my race, the bitterness of which its frequency cannot diminish to any individual who suffers it, while it has dark enough to overshadow the whole after life with something blacker than a funeral pall. I was bought by a stranger. Almost immediately, however whether my childish strength, at five or six years of age, was overmastered by such scenes & experiences, or from some accidental cause, I fell sick, & seemed to my new master so little likely to recover, that he proposed to R. the purchase of my mother, to take

me too, at such a trifling rate that it could not be refused. I was thus providentially restored to my mother, & under her care, destitute as she was of the proper means of nursing me, I recovered my health, & grew up to be an uncommonly vigorous, healthy boy & man.

The character of R. the master whom I faithfully served for many years, is by no means an uncommon one in any part of the world; but it is to be regretted that a domestic institution should anywhere put it in the power of such a one to tyrannize over his fellow beings, & inflict so much needless misery as is sure to be produced by such a man in such a position. Coarse, & vulgar in his habits, unprincipled, & cruel in his general deportment, & especially addicted to the vice of licentiousness, his slaves had little opportunity for relaxation from wearying labor, & were supplied with the scantiest means of sustaining their toil by wretched food, & had no security for personal rights.

The natural tendency of slavery is to convert the master into a tyrant, & the slave into the cringing, treacherous, false & thieving victim of tyranny. R. & his slaves were no exception to the general rule, but might be cited as apt illustrations of the nature of the case.

My earliest employments were, to carry buckets of water to the men at work, to hold a horse plough used for weeding between the rows of corn, to keep Green Bailey's stable, to take care of master's saddle horse. Then a hoe was put into my hands, & I was soon required to do the day's work of a man; & it was not long before I could do it, at least as well as my associates in misery.

The every day life of a slave on one of our southern plantations, however ingenuously it may have been described, is generally little known at the north, & must be mentioned as a necessary illustration of the character & habits of the slave & the slave holder, created & perpetuated by their relative position. The principal food of those upon my master's plantation consisted of corn meal, with the scanty variety of preparation which was possible; salt & herrings; to which was added in summer a little buttermilk, & the few vegetables which each might raise for himself & his family, on the little piece of ground called a truck patch, which was assigned to him for the purpose.

The meals were two daily. The first, or breakfast, was taken at 12 o'clk. after laboring from daylight; & the other when the work of the remainder of the day was over. The dress of the men was of tow cloth, which for the young, & often even for those who had passed the period of childhood, consisted of a single garment, something like a shirt, but longer, reaching to the ankles; & for the older a pair of pantaloons,

round jacket or

or according to the sex, while
a gown, some kind of over coat might be
in winter for the males
added; a wool hat once in two or three years.
& a pair of coarse shoes, once a year.

Our lodging was in
log huts, of a single small room, with no other
floor than the trodden earth, in which ten
or a dozen persons, men, women, & children,
might sleep, but which could not protect
them from dampness, & cold, nor permit the
existence of the common decencies of life.
There were neither beds, nor furniture of any
description, a blanket being the only addition
to the rags of the day for protection from the
chilliness of the air or the earth. In these
wretched hovels we were penned at night, & fed by day; here
were the children born, & the sick neglected.
Such were the provisions for the daily wants of the slave.
Notwithstanding this system of manage-
ment, however, I grew to be a robust & vigorous
boy, & at fifteen years of age, there were few
who could compete with me in work, or
in sport, for not even the condition of a
slave can altogether repress the animal
spirits of a young negro. I was competent

to all the work that was done upon the farm, & could. run, faster & farther wrestle, longer & jump standing & running higher than any body about me. My master & my fellow slaves used to look upon me, & speak of me as a wonderfully smart fellow, & prophecy the great things I should do when I became a man. A casual word of this sort, sometimes overheard, would fill me with a pride & ambition which some would think impossible in a negro slave, degraded, starved, & abused as I was, & had been, from my earliest recollection. But the love of superiority is not confined to kings & emperors; & it is a positive fact that pride & ambition were as active in my soul as probably they ever were in that of the greatest soldier or statesman. The objects, I pursued, I must admit, were not just the same as this. Mine were to be the first in the field, whether we were hoeing, mowing, or reaping; to outrun those of my own age, or indeed any age, in athletic exercises; & to obtain, if possible, the favorable

regard of the petty despot who ruled over me. This last was an exercise of the understanding, rather than of the affections; & I was guided in it more by what I supposed would be effectual, than by a nice judgment of the propriety of the means I used.

I obtained great influence with my companions, as well by the superiority I showed in labor & in sport, as by the assistance I yielded them, & the favors I conferred upon them, from impulses which I cannot consider as wrong, though it was necessary for me to conceal, sometimes, the act as well as its motive. I have toiled, & induced others to toil, many an extra hour, in order to show my master what an excellent day's work had been accomplished, & to win a kind word, or a benevolent look from his callous heart: for general, indifference, or a cool calculation of my value to him, were my rewards; omitting those hopes of improvement in my condition, instead of an opportunity

which were
the ultimate object of my efforts. I was
much more easily moved to compassion
& sympathy than he was; & one of the means
I took to gain the goodwill of my fellow
sufferers, was by taking from him some things which he
did not give, in part payment of my extra
labor. The condition of the male slave is
bad enough, heaven knows; but that of the
female, compelled to perform unfit labor, sick,
suffering, & bearing the burdens of her own
sex unpitied & unaided, as well as the toils
which belong to the other, has often oppressed
me with a load of sympathy. And sometimes when I have seen them stunned, &
[illegible] miscarry, & unable to help themselves,
I have helped them to some of the comforts,
which they were denied by him who owned
them, & which my companions had not the
wit or the daring to procure. Meat was
not a part of our regular food; but my
master had plenty of sheep & pigs, & sometimes I
have picked out the best one I could find

2.

in the dead of night
in the flock, carried it a mile or two
into the woods, slaughtered it, cut it up
& distributed it among the poor creatures,
to whom it was at once food, luxury & medicine.
Was this wrong? I can only say that, at
this distance of time, my conscience does
not reproach me for it, & that then I es-
teemed it among the best of my deeds.

"By means of the influence thus acquired,
the increased amount of work done upon
the farm, & by the detection of the knavery
of the overseer, who plundered his employer
for more selfish ends; & though my watch-
fulness was caught in the act, & dismissed,
I was promoted to be superintendent of
the farm work, & managed to raise more
than double the crops, with more cheerful
& willing labor than was ever seen on
the estate before.

"Previous to my attaining this important
station, however, an incident occurred of
so powerful an influence on my intellectual

a misfortune, my prospect of improvement in character as well as condition, in short of religious culture, lies that in my whole nature, body & soul, that it descends to moral & communication. There was a person man living at Georgetown, a few miles only from R.'s plantation, whose business was that of a baker, & whose character was that of an upright, benevolent, Christian man. He was noted everywhere for his detestation of slavery, & his resolute avoidance of the employment of slave labor in his business. He would not own him a slave, the price of whose toil must be paid to his master, but contented himself with the work of his own hands, & with such free labor as he could hire. His reputation was high not only for this almost singular abstinence from what no one about him thought wrong, but for his general probity & excellence. This man occasionally served as a minister of the Gospel, & preached in a neighborhood where preachers

were somewhat rare at that period. On Sundays when he was to officiate in this way, at a place three or four miles distant, my mother persuaded me to ask master's leave to go & hear him; & although such permission was not given freely or often, yet his favor to me was shown for this once by giving me leave to go, without much scolding, but not without a pretty distinct intimation of what would befal me if I did not return immediately after the close of the services. I hurried off, pleased with the opportunity, but without any definite expectations of benefit or amusement; for up to this period of my life, & I was then eighteen years old, I had never heard a sermon, nor any discourse or conversation whatever, upon religious topics, except what had been impressed upon me by my mother of the responsibility of all to a Supreme Being. When I arrived at the place of meeting, the services were so far advanced that the speaker was just beginning his discourse from the text, Hebrews 2. 9. "That he, by the

grace of God, should taste of death for every man." This was the first text of the Bible to which I had ever listened, (knowing it to be such,) I have never forgotten it, & scarce a day has passed since, in which I have not recalled it, & the sermon that was preached from it. The divine character of Jesus Christ, his life & teachings, his sacrifice of himself for ~~[illegible]~~ others, his death & resurrection were all alluded to, & some of these points were dwelt upon with great power, great, at least, to me, who heard of these things for the first time in my life. I was wonderfully impressed, too, with the use which the preacher made of the last words of the text, "for every man." He said the death of Christ was not designed for the benefit of a select few only, but for the salvation of the world, for the bond as well as the free; & he dwelt on the glad tidings of the Gospel to the poor, the persecuted & the distressed, its deliverance to the captive, & the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, till my heart burned within me, & I was in a state of the greatest excitement - at the thought that such

a being as Jesus Christ had been described should have died for me — for me among the rest — a poor, despised, abused slave, who was taught by his fellow creatures, [illegible] fit for nothing but unrequited toil, ignorance, for mental & bodily [illegible] degradation. I immediately determined to find out something more about "Christ & him crucified"; & revolving the things which I had heard, in my mind, as I went home, I became so excited that I turned aside from the road into the woods, & prayed to God for light & for aid with an earnestness, which, however unenlightened, was at least sincere & heartfelt; & which the subsequent course of my life has led me to [illegible] might not have been unacceptable to Him who hearkens prayer. [illegible]

At all events I date my conversion, & my awakening to a new life, a consciousness of superior powers & destiny to any thing I had before conceived of, from this day, so memorable to me. I used every means & opportunity of inquiring into religious matters: & so deep was my conviction of their superior importance to every thing else, so clear my perception of my own guilt, & so undoubting my observation of the darkness & sin that surrounded me, that I could not help talking much on these subjects with those about me; & it was not long before I began to pray with them, & exhort them to impart to the poor slaves those little glimmerings of light from another world which had reached my own eye. In a few years I became quite an esteemed preacher among them, & I will not believe it is vanity which leads me to think I was useful to some.

I must return; however, for the present,

to the course of my life in secular affairs, the facts of which it is my principal object to relate. The difference between the manner in which it was designed that all men should regard one another, as children of the same Father, & the manner in which men actually do treat each other, as if they were placed here for mutual annoyance & destruction, is well exemplified by an incident that happened to me within a year or two from this period, i.e. when I was nineteen or twenty years old. My master's habits were such as were common enough among the dissipated planters of the neighborhood; one of their frequent practices was to assemble on Saturday or Sunday, which were their holidays, & gamble, ~~bet~~ on horses, or fight game cocks, discuss politics, & drink whiskey & brandy & water all day long. Perfectly aware that they would not be able to find their own way home at night, each one ordered a slave, his particular attendant, to come after him & help him home. I was chosen for

this confidential duty by my master & many
a time I have held ~~my~~ him on his
horse, when he could not hold himself in
the saddle, guarded by his side in darkness
& mud from the tavern to his house. Of many
quarrels & brawls of the most violent description
more frequent consequences of these meetings,
& whenever they became especially dangerous,
& glasses were thrown, dirks drawn, & pistols
fired, it was the duty of the slaves to watch
in, & each one, was to
duty, from the tight, & carry him home.
So tell the truth this was a part of my
business for which I felt no reluctance.
I was young, remarkably athletic, & self-
relying; & in such affrays I carried it
with a high hand, & would elbow my
way among the whites, whom it would have
been almost death for me to strike, seize my master,
& drag him out, mount him on his horse, &
crowd him into his buggy, with the same
unwillingness with which I would handle

a boy of 10, & at the same time with the pride of conscious superiority, & the kindness inspired by performing an act of benevolence. I knew I was doing for him what he could not do for himself, & showing my superiority to him, & acquiring their respect, in some degree, at the same time! In one of these occasions my master got into a quarrel with his brother's overseer, who was one of the party, & in rescuing the former I suppose I was a little more rough with the latter than usual. I remember his falling upon the floor, & very likely it was from the effects of a push from me or a movement of my elbow. He attributed his fall to me, rather than to the whiskey he had drunk, & treasured up his vengeance for the first favorable opportunity. About a week afterwards I was sent by my master to a place a few miles distant, on horseback, with some letters. I took a road cut through a farm, & turned to the right from the high road, & bounded by a fence on each side. This lane passed through

some of the same owned by my master both. this overseer was in the adjoining field with three negroes, when I went by. he rang to him, a half an hour afterwards, I suppose, was sitting on the fence; but I cannot be sure of the black fellows. I was, altho, mistrustful of any trouble; but as I approached he jumped off the fence; at the same moment two of the negroes sprung up from under the bushes where they had been concealed, & stood with him immediately in front of me, while the third sprang over the fence just behind me. I was thus enclosed between and could no longer doubt were hostile forces. the overseer seized my horse's bridle, ordered me to alight in the usual elegant phraseology used by men to slaves. I asked what I was to alight for. "to take the cursedest flogging you ever had in your life, you d—d black scoundrel." "but what am I to be flogged for, Mr. L." I asked. "Not a word", said he, "but light-a-way, & take off your jacket." I saw

there was nothing else to be done, & slipped off the horse on the opposite side from him. "Now take off your shirt," cried he, but I demurred at this, he lifted a stick he had in his hand to strike me, but so suddenly & violently that he frightened the horse, which broke away from him & ran home. I was thus left without means of escape to sustain the attacks of four men, as well as my own, but I, knowing my physical power, was resolved to sell them as dear as I might. The overseer called upon the negroes to seize me, but they, knowing from the slow & clumsy manner in which I had accidentally got into a corner of the fence, that I could not be approached except in front, at length did. their best; & as they brought themselves within my reach, I knocked them down successively; & one of them trying to [illegible] (P. 17. bye.) my feet when he was down, I gave him a kick with my heavy shoe, which knocked out several of his front teeth, & sent him groaning away. Meanwhile the cowardly overseer was availing himself of every opportunity to hit me over the head with his stick, which was not heavy enough to knock me down, though it drew blood freely. At length tired of the length of

the strong he went a little to one side
long from the fire, placed it on the
ist on the ground. He then
off the bear on right on our backs
I was bought to the ground on our
knees broke both my thighs
under the bear not for my mouth
opened. So the bear began to
the meat on, the fat on
taking out the liver and it was to the
a while more. — He then on his
of the bear to bring the head on his
without fat tire, so on
more to carry on. If
on the substance of bear not have without
some left in my hut, so
on bear on, the wound on on his
I could feel from the fingers of my hands
hands pale against and after with my
breath. He skeleton of bear was called
to help my wound of more bear on to
he carried to a tree upon of which on

him that nothing had moved him ex-
cept a belief in the fact he stated & pleas-
ed the jurors circumstances that did
then exist & not now exist which caused him
said that no matter said all the costs of
court. He was the defendant of saving the
I, & was rescinded, & defendant of having his
in a new record, he answer, for which he was
sent to me & the jail.

The defendant answered I received, together with
the stated sum in said matter, one not to dis-
continue action until being in suit & a new trial
for a short consideration, as little to the amount
I was due to me from him. I am not sure that
I did not say nearly more than he owed him
some months, in speaking his words with bene
fear; but I stated him in this way in some
matter, it was unnecessary for his own benefit
in any important way; I accounted with
the defendant hands for cash above I received
in the said to the people entitled & me. Gradu-
ally the defendant from being active on the
farm, he used, sold, hay, fruit, butter &c &
was the time might be was confined to

as it was quite evident that I could, & did act for better purs than any one else he could employ, & he was quite incompetent to attend to the business himself. For many years I was his factotum, supplied him with all his means for all his purposes, whether they were good or bad. I had no reason to think highly of his moral character, but it was my duty to be faithful to him, in the position in which he placed me; & I can boldly declare, before God & man, that I was so. I forgave him the causeless blows & injuries he had inflicted on me in childhood & youth, & was proud of the favor he now showed me, & of the character & reputation I had earned by strenuous & unremitting efforts. II When I was about twenty two years of age, I married a very efficient, & for a slave, a very well taught girl belonging to a neighboring family. She was of the pious & kind, whom I first met at the chapel I attended; & during nearly forty years that have since elapsed I have had no reason to regret the connexion, but many to rejoice in it, & be grateful for it. She has borne me twelve children, eight of whom survive; &

promise to be the comfort of my declining years. Things remained in this condition for a considerable period, my occupations being to superintend the farming operations, & to sell the produce in the neighboring markets of Washington & Georgetown. Many respectable people, yet living there, may possibly have some recollection of "Dick", & "Pet", (as they used to call me) as this market man; but if they have forgotten me, I remember them with an honest satisfaction. II. After passing his youth in the manner I have mentioned in a general way, which I do not wish more particularly to describe, my master, at the age of forty five, or upwards, married a young woman of eighteen; who had some little money, & more thrift. Her economy was remarkable, & was certainly no addition to the comfort of the establishment. She had a younger brother, Francis, to whom R. was appointed guardian, & who used to complain, not without reason I am confident, of the meanness of the provision made for the household; & he would often come to me with tears in his eyes, to tell me h-

could not get enough to eat. I made him my friend for life, by sympathising in his emotions, & satisfying his appetite; sharing with him the provisions food I took care to provide for my own family.

After a time, however, continual dissipation was more than a match for domestic saving. My master fell into difficulty, & from difficulty into a lawsuit with a brother in law, who charged him with dishonest mismanagement of property confided to him in trust. The lawsuit was protracted enough to cause his ruin, of itself. He used every resource to stave off the inevitable result, but at length saw no means of relief but removal to another state. He often came to my cabin to pass the evening in lamentations over his misfortune, in cursing his brother-in-law, & in asking my advice & assistance. The first time he ever intimated to me his ultimate project, he said he was ruined, that every thing was gone, that there was but one resource, & that depended upon me. "How can that be, master," said I in astonishment. Before he

would explain himself, however, he begged me to promise to do what he should know, well knowing, from his past experience of my character, that I should hold myself bound by such a promise to do all that it implied, if it were within the limits of possibility. Solicited in this way, with urgency & tears, by the man whom I had so zealously served for twenty years, & who now seemed absolutely dependent upon his slave; impelled, too, by the fear which he skilfully awakened, that the sheriff would seize every one who belonged to him, & that all would be separated, or perhaps sold to go to Georgia, or Louisiana, — an object of perpetual dread to the slave of the more northern states, — I consented, & promised faithfully to do all I could to save him from the fate impending over him. He then told me I must take his slaves to his brother, in Kentucky. In vain I represented to him that I had never travelled a day's journey from his plantation, & knew nothing of the way, or the means, of getting a waggon.

He insisted that such a smart fellow as I could travel any where, & promised to give me all necessary instructions, & urged that this was the only course by which he could be saved. The result was that I agreed to undertake the enterprize, certainly no light one for me, as it could scarcely be considered for even an experienced manager. There were eighteen negroes, besides my wife, two children, & myself to transport nearly a thousand miles, through a country I knew nothing about, & in a wintry time, for we started in the month of February 1825. My master proposed to follow me in a few months, & establish himself in Kentucky. He furnished me with a small sum of money, & some provisions, & I bought a one horse wagon, to carry them, & to give the women & children a lift now & then, & the rest of us were to trudge on foot. Fortunately for the success of the undertaking, these people had been long under my direction, & were devotedly attached to me for the many alleviations I had afforded them to their miserable condition, the comforts I had procured them, & the consideration which I had always manifested for them.

Under these circumstances no difficulty arose from want of submission to my authority, & none of any sort except that which I necessarily encountered from my ignorance of the country, & my inexperience in such business. In arriving at Wheeling I sold the horse & wagon, & purchased a boat of sufficient size, & floated down the river without further trouble, or fatigue; stopping every night to encamp. I said I had no further trouble, but there was one source of anxiety which I was compelled to encounter, & a temptation I had to resist, the sting of which others can appreciate as well as myself. In passing along the state of Ohio, we were frequently told that we were free, if we chose to be so. At Cincinnati, especially, the colored people gathered round us, & urged us with much importunity to remain with them; told us it was folly to go on, & in short used all the arguments now so familiar to induce slaves to quit their masters. My companions probably had little perception of the nature of the boon that was offered to them, & were willing to do

just as I told them, without a wish to judge for themselves. Not so with me. From my earliest recollection, freedom had been the object of my ambition, a constant motive to exertion, an ever present stimulus to gain & to save. No other means of obtaining it, however, had occurred to me but purchasing myself of my master. The idea of running away was not one trial I had ever indulged. I had a sentiment of honor on the subject, or what I thought such, which I would not have violated even for freedom; & every cent which I had ever felt entitled to call my own had been treasured up for this great purpose, till I had accumulated between thirty & forty dollars. Now was offered to me an opportunity I had not anticipated. I might liberate my family, my companions, & myself, without the smallest risk; without injustice to any individual, except one whom we had none of us any reason to love, who had been guilty of cruelty & oppression to us all for many years, & who

had never shown the smallest symptom of sympathy with us, or with any one in our condition. But I need not make the ~~Kentucky~~ exception. There would have been no injustice to K. himself, — it would have been a retribution which might be called righteous — if I had availed myself of the opportunity thus thrust suddenly upon me. But it was a punishment which it was not for me to inflict. I had promised that man to take his property to Kentucky, & do so with it with his brother, & this, & this only I resolved to do. — I left Cincinnati before night, though I had intended to remain there, & encamped with my entire party a few miles below the city. What advantages I may have lost by thus throwing away an opportunity of obtaining ~~my~~ freedom, I know not; but the perception of my own strength of character, the feeling of integrity, the sentiment of high honor, I have experienced. These advantages I do know, & prize; & would not lose them, nor the recollection of having

P.

manifested them for all that I can imagine.

to have resulted from an earlier release from
bondage. we often had painful doubts as to the propriety of my carrying, as many others
finally into slavery again, my consoling reflection was that I acted as I thought, at
the time, for the best.

I arrived at Lewis's County Kentucky
about the middle of April, 1828, & delivered myself
& my companions to Mr. Amos R. the brother of my
owner, who had a large plantation with from
sixty to one hundred negroes. His house was
situated about nine miles south of the Ohio River, & fifteen miles above
Lillies Banks, on Big Blackford's Creek. Thus I
remained three years, expecting my master to join
me: employed mainly on the farm, & while
I had, under him, the general management, in
consequence of the recommendation for ability
& honesty which I brought with me from
Maryland. The situation was in many respects
more comfortable than that I had left. The farm
was larger, & more fertile, & there was a greater abun-
dance of food, which is, of course, one of the principal
sources of the comfort of a slave, debarred, as he is,
from so many other enjoyments which others men
can obtain. Sufficiency of food is a pretty impor-
tant item in any man's account of life; but
is trifling more so in that of the slave whose
appetite is always stimulated by as much labor

as he can perform, & whose mind is little occupied by thought on subjects of deeper interest. My part of superintendent gave me some advantages, too, of which I did not fail to avail myself, particularly with regard to those religious privileges, which, since I first heard of Christ & Christianity, had greatly occupied my mind. In Kentucky the opportunities of attending on the preaching of whites, as well as of blacks, were more numerous; & partly by attending them, & the camp meetings which occurred from time to time, & partly from studying carefully my own heart, & observing the developments of character around me in all the stations of life which I could watch, I became better acquainted with those religious feelings which are deeply implanted in the breast of every human being; & learnt by practice how best to arouse them, & keep them excited, how to stir up the callous & indifferent, & in general to produce some good religious impressions in the ignorant & thoughtless community by which I was surrounded. TJD

real amount of theological knowledge is manifest in the future. If it had been, it is manifest enough that preaching never could have been my vocation; but I am persuaded that speaking from the fulness of a heart deeply interested with its sinfulness & infection, & with the mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, my humble ministrations have not been useless to those who have had its opportunity to myself to reflect upon these all important subjects. It is certain that I could not refrain from the endeavor to do what I saw others doing in this field; & I labored at once to improve myself & those about me in the cultivation of the harvests which ripen only in eternity. I cannot but derive some satisfaction, too, from the proofs I have had that my services have been acceptable, [illegible] to those to whom they have been rendered. In the course of the three years from 1825 to 1828, I availed myself of all the opportunities of improvement which occurred, & was admitted as a preacher by a Conference

of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist

In the spring of the year 1828, news arrived from my master that he was unable to induce his wife to accompany him to Kentucky, & he must therefore remain where he was. He sent out an agent to sell all his slaves but me & my family, & to carry back the proceeds to him. And now another of those heart rending scenes was to be witnessed, which had imprinted itself so deeply on my childish soul. Husbands & wives, parents & children were to be separated forever. Affections which are as strong in the African as in the European were to be cruelly disregarded; & the most selfishness generated by the hateful "institution" was to be exhibited in its most odious & naked deformity. I was exempted from a personal share in the dreadful calamity, but I could not see without the deepest grief the agony which I recollected in my own mother, & which was again brought before my eyes in the persons with whom I had been long associated; nor could I refrain from the bitterest loathing & hatred of the system, & those

who sustain it. What else, indeed, can be the feeling of the slave, liable at every moment of his life to these frightful unnecessary calamities, which may be caused by the caprice of the abandoned, or the supposed necessities of the better part of the slaveholders, & inflicted upon him without sympathy or redress, under the sanction of the laws which uphold the institution? I lamented my agency in bringing the poor creatures there hither, if such was to be the end of the expedition; but I could not reproach myself with having made their condition really worse, nor with any thing but complying with the commands of a heartless master.

In the course of the summer of 1828 a methodist preacher, a white man of some reputation, visited our neighborhood, I became acquainted with him. He became interested in me, visited me frequently, & one day talked to me in a confidential manner about my position. He said I ought to be free; that I had too much capacity to be confined to the limited & comparatively useless sphere of a slave; "although," said he,

"I must not be known to have spoken to you on this subject; yet if you will obtain Mr. Amos's consent to go to see your old master in Maryland, I will try & put you in a way by which I think you may succeed in buying yourself." He said this to me more than once, & as it was in harmony with all my aspirations & wishes, was flattering to my self esteem, & could be attended with no harm that I could foresee, I soon resolved to make the attempt to get the necessary leave. Somewhat to my surprise, Master Amos made no objection; but gave me a pass to go to Maryland & back, with some remarks which showed his sense of the value of my services to him, & his opinion that I had earned the privilege, if I desired it. Furnished with this, with a letter of recommendation from my Methodist friend to a brother preacher in Cincinnati, I started about the middle of September, 1830, for the east. By the aid of the good man to whom I had a letter, I had an opportunity of preaching, in two or three of the principal

Cincinnati, when I took the opportunity of stating my purpose, was liberally aided in it by contributions made on the spot. My friend also procured some subscriptions in the city, so that in three or four days I left it with not less than $100 in my pocket.

The annual Methodist Conference was about to be held at Chilicothe, to which my kind friend accompanied me, by his influence & exertions I succeeded well there also. By his advice I then purchased a suit of respectable clothes, & an excellent horse; & travelled steadily from town to town, preaching as I went, & whenever circumstances were favorable, soliciting aid in my great object. I succeeded so well, that when I arrived at Montgomery County, I was master of $275, besides my horse & my clothes. My master was surprised to see me dressed & mounted in so respectable a style, & I must say, my horse was a good one, & my clothes better than Mr. R.'s; & he was a little puzzled to understand when I was at home in reaching home, for it was near Christmas, & he had been informed that I had left Kentucky in September.

I gave him such an account of my reaching & getting the assistance of friends, as, while it was consistent with the truth, explained my appearance, did not betray to him my principal purpose. Amid expressions of an apparently cordial welcome, I could discern plainly enough the look of displeasure that a slave should have got hold of such luxuries; & he taunted me not a little, in his coarse way, upon my reaching, & my being so speedily converted into a "black gentleman". He asked for my pass, & saw that it was expressed so as to authorize my return to Kentucky. He then handed it to his wife, & desired her to put it into the desk. The manœuvre was cool, but I resolved to manœuvre too. It might be I was sent to such quarters as I had been accustomed to long enough, — the cabin used for a kitchen, with its earth floor, its filth, & its numerous occupants; — but it was so different from my accommodations in the free states for the last three months, & so incompatible with my nice wardrobe, that I looked round me with a sensation of disgust that was

drew to me; instead of going to sleep, I sat down & determined upon the best plan ~~[illegible]~~ to adopt for my next proceedings. I found my mother had died during my absence, & every tie which had ever connected me with this place was broken. Strangers were around me here, the slaves being those Mrs. R. had brought to her husband; & I had not a friend to consult but Martin Frank, who was now of age, & had established himself in business in Washington. To him I resolved to go, & as soon as I thought it time to start, I saddled my horse, rode up to the house. It was early in the morning, & my master had already gone to the tavern on his usual ~~[illegible]~~ business, but Mrs. R. came out to look at my horse equipments. "Where are you going, Dick?" was the natural question. I replied, "I am going to Washington, Mistress, to see Mr. Frank, & I must take my pass with me, if you please."

"Oh every body knows you here; you won't need your pass." "But I can't go to Washington without it. I may be met by some surly stranger who will stop me

the brother of R's wife, mentioned before

& plague me, if he can't do any thing more"
"Well, I'll get it for you", she answered;
& glad was I to see her return with it in
her hand, & to have her give it to me,
while the
& little imagining ed its importance to my plans.
My reception by Master Frank was all I expected;
as kind & hearty as possible. He was delighted
at my appearance, & I immediately told him
all my plans & hopes. He entered cordially into
them, with that sympathy which penetrates
the heart of a slave, as little accustomed as I had been
to the exhibition of any such feeling on the part
of a white man. I found he had a the
rough detestation of Mr. R. whom he charged
with having defrauded him of a large por
tion of his property which he had held as guardian
wrongly, as he was still on terms with him,
he readily agreed to negotiate with Mr. Auld
for my freedom
him, & will bring him to the most
favorable conditions terms. Accordingly in a few days
he rode over to the house, & had a long conver
sation with R. on the subject of my emanci
pation. He disclosed to him the facts that
I had got some money, enough to pass, & that

I was a smart fellow, who was bent upon getting his freedom, & had served the family faithfully for many years; that I had really paid for myself a hundred times over, in the increased amount of produce I had raised by my skill & influence; & that if he did not take care, & accept a fair offer when I made it to him, he would find some day (33 dig 3) that I had the means to do without his help, & that he would see neither me nor my money; that with my horse & my wagon I was pretty independent of him already, & he had better make up his mind to what was really inevitable, & do it with a good grace. By such arguments as these, Mr. Frank not only induced him to think of the thing, but before long brought him to an actual bargain, by which he agreed to give me my manumission papers for $450, of which $350 were to be in cash, & the remainder in my note. My Money & my horse enabled me to pay the cash at once, & thus my

great hopes seemed to be in a fair way of being realized. Some time was spent in the negotiations for this affair, but it was not till the 9th of March 1829, that I received my manumission papers in due form of law. I was prepared to start immediately, on my return to Kentucke, but the 10th as I was getting ready in the morning for my journey, my master accosted me in a very pleasant & friendly manner, & entered into conversation with me about my plans. He asked me what I was going to do with my freedom certificate; whether I was going to show it if I were questioned on the road? I told him yes, that I supposed it was given to me for that very purpose. "Ah, said he, you do not understand the dangers to which you are exposed. You may meet some ruffian slave purchaser who will rob you of that piece of paper, & destroy it. You will then be thrown into prison, & sold for your jail fees, before any of your friends can know it. Why should you show it at all? ~~He had undersee it~~ You can go to Kentucky in perfect safety with your pass

Let me enclose that valuable document & or
now under cover to my brother, & nobody will
dare to break a seal, for that is a State prison
matter, & when you arrive in Kentucky you
will have it all safe & sound." This seemed
most
~~wisely~~ friendly advice, & I felt very grateful
for his kindness. I accordingly saw him
enclose
~~seal~~ my precious piece of paper in two
or three envelopes, ~~&~~ seal it with three seals,
& direct it to his brother in Davies County, Kentucky.
in my care.

Leaving immediately for Wheeling, to which
place I was obliged to travel on foot, I there
took boat, & it was of course several weeks before
I reached my destination. I was arrested
repeatedly
~~several times~~ on the way, but by insisting
always upon being carried before a magistrate,
I succeeded in escaping all serious impediments,
by means of my pass, which was quite regular,
& could not be set aside by any responsible
authority. It so happened that the boat which
took me down from Louisville, landed me
about dark; & my walk of five miles brought
me to the plantation ~~etc~~ at bed time. I went
directly to my own cabin, where I found my
wife & little one, ~~& a~~ & a welcome; & of
course, we had a good deal to communicate

to each other. Letters had reached the "great house", as the master's was always called, long before I had arrived, telling them what I had been doing; & the children of the family had been eager to communicate the great news to my wife — how I had been preaching, & raising money, & making a bargain for my freedom. It was not long before Charlotte began to tell me with much excitement what she had heard, & to question me about how I had raised the money I had paid, & how I expected to get the remainder of the thousand dollars I was to give for my freedom. I could scarcely believe my ears; but before telling her how the case really was, I questioned her again & again as to what she had heard. She persisted in repeating the same story, as she had heard it from my master's letters, & I began to perceive the trick that had been played upon me, & to see the management by which Isaac R. had continued that the only evidence of my freedom should be kept from the very eye-ball that of his brother Amos, who was instructed to keep it till I had made up $650, the

balance I was reported to have agreed to pay. Indignation is a faint word to express my deep sense of such villainy. I was without the means of setting myself right. The only witness to the truth was my friend Frank, who was a thousand miles off; & I could neither write to him, nor get any one else to do it. Every man about me, who could write was a slave holder. And what chance had I to be believed, or to get evidence to the truth? In this dilemma I resolved not to deliver the paper to Amos, told my wife I had not seen it since I was in Louisville. It might be in my overcoat bag, & perhaps it was lost; but at all events I did not wish to see it again at present, lest she should find it, & put it in some place which I did not know, it would be the best disposition of it. In a few minutes she went out, & I remained in ignorance where it was, till circumstances presently occurred to be mentioned rendered it necessary for me to have it again.

The next morning I went up to the house, & showed myself to Mr. Amos, who welcomed me with apparent cordiality, & who, I have no doubt, was really glad to see me, as my time

& Hubert were important to him. He had a long conversation, after rallying me, as his brother had done, about my being turned fine gentleman, he entered upon the subject of my freedom, & told me what Isaac had written to him about the price I was to pay, how much I had already made up, &c. I found my wife was right. When then asked me if I had not a paper for him, I told him I certainly had received something for him, of which I had taken the greatest care; but that the last time I had seen it was at Louisville, & that now it was not in my bag, & I did not know what had become of it. I could not conceive how it could be lost, & yet I could not find it. He expressed great concern, & sent me back to the landing to see if it had been dropped on the way. When the search proved in vain, he told me that, after all, it was of no consequence, for whenever I made up the money, his brother would renew the paper. "But" said he, you have given too much for yourself. Isaac has been too hard upon you, & I dont see how you are going to get so much in Kentucky."

All this was very smooth & pleasant to

a man who was in a phrensy of grief at the bad & apparently irremediable trick that had been played upon him. I consoled myself as well as I could, & set about my work again, with as quiet a mind as I could command; resolved to trust in God, & never despair.
Things went on as usual for about a year, when one day Mr. Amos told me that his brother kept writing to him about his want of money; & intimated that perhaps I might be ready to pay another instalment of my price. I told him I had nothing, as he knew very well; & that he never had said what he would allow me, or whether he would allow me any thing, for my labor in his service. That put an end to the conversation at the time, for he did not like the idea of paying for the labor I had bestowed on his farm, the care of his stock & of his people. It was not long, however, before the subject was brought up again, & he said Isaac was perpetually telling him he must have money, & that I must get ready to go to New Orleans with his son Amos, a young man about twenty one, who was going down the river with a flat boat, & was almost ready to start;

in fact he was to leave the next day, & I must go & take care of him. The intimation (though it was not distinctly stated yet) was enough. I well knew what was intended, & my heart sunk within me at the near prospect of this fatal blight to all my long cherished hopes. There was no alternative, but death itself; & I thought that there was hope as long as there was life, & I would not despair even yet. The expectation of my fate, however, produced the degree of misery nearest to that of despair, & it is in vain for me to attempt to describe the wretchedness I experienced as I made ready to go on board the flat boat. I had little preparation to make, to be sure; & time was but one thing that seemed to me important. I asked my wife to sew up my manumission paper securely in a piece of cloth, & to sew that again round my person. I thought that having possession of it might be the means of saving me yet, & I would not neglect any thing that offered the smallest chance of escape from the frightful servitude that threatened me.

My wife & children accompanied me to the landing, where I bade them an adieu, which

might be pr. line, & then stepped into the boat, which I found manned by three white men, who had been hired for the trip. Mr. Amos & myself were the only other persons on board. The load consisted of beef cattle, pigs, poultry, corn, whiskey, & other articles from the farm, & from some of the neighboring estates, which were to be sold as E we dropped down the river, wherever they could be disposed of to the greatest advantage. It was a common trading voyage to New Orleans in which I was embarked, the interest of which consisted not in the incidents that occurred, not in storms, or shipwreck, or external disaster of any sort; but in the storm of passions contending within me, & the imminent risk of the shipwreck of my soul, which was impending over me nearly the whole period of the voyage. One circumstance only I will mention, illustrating, as other events of my life have often done, the counsel of the Saviour, "He that will be chief among you, let him be your servant." We were, of course, all bound to take our trick at the helm in turn, sometimes

under direction of the captain, sometimes on our own responsibility, as he could not be always awake. In the day time there was less difficulty than at night, when it required some one, one who had this knowledge, & the Captain was the only person on board who knew the river to avoid sand-bars, snags, &c. But whether by day or by night, as I was the only negro on the boat, I was made to stand more than three hundred at least times to any other man's one, so that from being much with the captain, frequently thrown upon my own exertions, I learnt the art of steering & managing the boat far better than the rest. I watched the manœuvres necessary to shoot by a sawyer, to land on a bank, to avoid a snag, or a steam-boat in the rapid current of the Mississippi, till I could do it as well as the captain. After a while the captain had a disease of the eyes, by which he became very much inflamed & swollen. His sight was rendered totally blind, & unable to perform his share of duty. This disease is not an unfrequent consequence of exposure to the intense light of the sun, doubled as it is by the reflection from the river. I was the person who could best take his place, & I was, in fact, master of the boat from that time till our arrival at

the Captain became blind

Nice Crescent. After [illegible], we were obliged to lie by at night, as none of the rest of us had been down the river before; & it was necessary to keep watch all night, to prevent depredations by the negroes on shore, who used frequently to attack such boats as ours, for the sake of the provisions on board. As I paced backwards & forwards on the deck, during my watch, it may well be believed I revolved many a painful, impassionate thought. Upon all that I had done for Isaac Adams R., after all the regard they professed for me, & the value they could not but put upon me, such a return as this for my services, such an evidence of their utter inattention to my claims upon them, & the intense selfishness with which they were ready to sacrifice me, at any moment, to their supposed interest, turned my blood to gall & wormwood, & changed me from a kindly, & I may say, a pleasant tempered person, into a savage, morose, dangerous slave. I was going, not at all as a lamb to the slaughter, but [illegible]. I felt myself becoming more ferocious every day; & as we approached the

place where this iniquity was to be consummated, I became more & more agitated with an almost uncontrollable fury. I had met, on the passage, with some of my Maryland acquaintance who had been sold off to this region, & their haggard & wasted appearance told a piteous story of excessive labor & insufficient food. I said to myself, if this is to be my lot, I cannot survive it long. I am not so young as these men, & if it has brought them to such a condition, it will soon kill me. I am to be taken by my masters & owners, who ought to be my grateful friends, to a place & a condition where my life is to be shortened, as well as made more wretched. Why should I not prevent this wrong, if I can, by shortening their lives, or those of their agents in accomplishing such detestable injustice? I can do the last easily enough. They have no suspicion of me, & they are at this moment under my control, & in my power. There are many ways in which I can despatch them & escape, & I feel that I should be

instigated in availing myself of the first good opportunity. These were not thoughts which just flitted across my mind's eye, & then disappeared. They fashioned themselves into shapes which grew larger, seemed firmer, every time they presented themselves; & at length my mind was made up to convert the phantom shadow into a positive reality. I resolved to kill my four companions, take what money there was in the boat, then to scuttle the craft, & escape to the north. It was a poor plan, maybe, & would very likely have failed; but it was as well contrived, under the circumstances, as the plans of murderers usually are; & blinded by passion, & stung to madness as I was, I could not see any difficulty about it. One dark, rainy night within a few days of New Orleans, my hour seemed to have come. I was alone on the deck; Mr. Amos & the hands were all asleep below, & I crept down noiselessly, got hold of an axe, entered the cabin, & looking by the aid of the dim light there for my

victims, when my eye fell upon Master Amos, who was nearest to me; [illegible] my hand slid along the axe handle, I raised it to strike the fatal blow, — when suddenly the thought came to me, "What! [illegible] commit murder! & man, [illegible] a Christian?"

I had not called it murder before. [illegible] It was self-defence, — it was preventing [illegible] from murdering me, — it was justifiable, it was even praiseworthy. But now, all at once, the truth burst upon me that it was a crime. I was going to kill a young man, who had done nothing to injure me, but obey commands which he could not resist; I was about to lose the fruit of all my efforts at self improvement, the character I had acquired, & the peace of mind which had never deserted me. All this came upon me instantaneously & a distinctness which made me almost think I heard it whispered in my ear.

I shrunk back, laid down the axe,

crept up on deck again, & thanked God, as I have done every day since, that I had not committed murder. My feelings were still agitated, but they were changed. I was filled with shame & remorse for the design I had entertained, & with the fear that my companions would detect it in my face, or that a careless word would betray my guilty thoughts. I remained on deck all night; instead of rousing one of them to relieve me, nothing brought composure to my mind, but the solemn resolution I then made to resign myself to the will of God, to take with thankfulness, if I could, but with submission at all events, whatever he might decide should be my lot. I reflected that if my life were reduced to a brief term, I should have less to suffer, & that it was better to die with a Christian's hope, & a quiet conscience, than to live with the incessant reproaches of a crime that would destroy the value of life under the weight of a secret that would cut out the satisfaction that might be expected from freedom & every other blessing.

It was long before I recovered my self-control, serenity; but I believe no one, but those to whom I have told the story myself, ever suspected me of having entertained such thoughts for a moment.

In a few days after this tremendous crisis we arrived in New Orleans, & the little cargo that remained was soon sold, the men were discharged, & nothing was left but to dispose of me, & break up the boat; & then Mr. Amos would take passage on a steam-boat, & go home. There was no longer any disguise about the purpose of selling me. Mr. Amos acknowledged that such were his instructions, & he set about fulfilling them. Several planters came to the boat to look at me; & I was sent ashore & made to run, that they might see how I could run. My points were canvassed as those of a horse would have been, & doubtless some account of my human faculties was thrown in to the discussion of the bargain, that my value as a domestic animal might be enhanced. Amos had talked with apparent kindness about getting me a good master, who would employ me as a coachman

or as a house servant; but as time passed on, I could discern no particular effort of the kind. At length every thing was wound up but this single affair. The boat was to be sold, & I was to be sold the next day, & Amos was to set off on his return, ~~[illegible]~~ at six o'clk. in the afternoon. I could not sleep that night, which seemed long enough to me, though it was one of the shortest in the year. The slow way in which we had come down, had brought us to the long days & the heat of June; every body knows what the climate of New Orleans is at that time of the year.

TP A little before daylight Master Amos awoke indisposed. His stomach was disordered, but he lay down again, thinking it would pass off; in a little while he was up again, & felt more sick than before ~~[illegible]~~ & it was soon ~~[illegible]~~ evident - that the ~~[illegible]~~ fever was upon him. He became rapidly worse, & by eight o'clk in the morning he was ~~[illegible]~~ delirious, his head was on my lap, & he was beg[illegible] me to help him, to do something for him, to save him. The tables

mine turned. He was now rather more dependent upon me, than I had been upon him the day before. He entrusted me to despatch matters, to secure the flat boat, in which we two had been living by ourselves for some days, & to get him, & his trunk containing the proceeds of the trip, on board the steamer as especially not to attract him as long as he lived, nor to suppose his body if he died, to be thrown into the river; & to get him back as possible, & they twelve o'clk. that day, he was in one of the cabins of the steamer appropriated to sick passengers. All was done which could be done for the comfort & ease of any one in such a desperate condition. But he was reduced to extremity. He ceased to grow worse after a day or two, & he must speedily have died, if he had not; but his strength was entirely gone, that he could neither speak, nor move a limb; & could only indicate his wish for a teaspoonful of gruel, or something to moisten his throat, by a feeble motion of his lips. I nursed him carefully, & constantly. Nothing else could have saved his life. It hung by a thread for a long time. We were as much as twelve days in ascending home, for the water was low at that

season, particularly in the Ohio river; & when
we arrived at
~~reached~~ our landing he was still unable
to speak, & could only be moved on a sheet,
or a litter. Something of this sort was soon
fixed up at the landing, on which he could
be carried to the house, which was five miles
off; & I got a party of the slaves belonging
to the estate to form relays for the purpose.
As we approached the house, the surprize
at seeing back again me, & the perplexity to imagine
what I was bringing along, with such
a party, were extreme; but ~~when~~ soon
~~the~~ discovery was made which explained
the strange appearance, & the grief of father
mother, brothers & sisters made itself seen
& heard. Loud & long were the lamentations
over her child; & when the corpse came a little
& thunder, great was the commendations
showered upon me, for my care of him & of
the property. We arrived home about the
10th of July, but it was not till the middle
of August that Amos was well enough to
move out of his chamber, though he had
been convalescent all the while. As soon as he

could speak; he told all I had done for him, & said, "If I had told him, I should have died;" but it never seemed to occur to him, or the rest of the family, that they were under any, the slightest, obligation to me, on that account. I had done well as a slave, & to have it acknowledged, & to be praised for it, was compensation enough for me. My masters, whatever they may instead of exciting sympathy, or any feeling of attachment to me, I could only be enhance my money value to them. This was not the view which took of the case myself; & as soon as I began to recover, I began to meditate upon a plan of escape from the danger, in which I constantly stood, of a repetition of the attempt to sell me in the highest market.

Providence seemed to have interfered once to defeat this scheme, but I could not expect such extraordinary circumstances to be repeated, & I was bound to do every thing in my power to secure myself from my family from the wicked conspiracy of Isaac Hurst.

against my life as well as against my natural rights in my own person, & those which I had acquired, under even the barbarous laws of slavery, by the money I had paid for myself. If Isaac would only have been honest enough to adhere to his own bargain, I would have adhered to mine, & paid him all I promised. But his attempt to kidnap me again, after having pocketed three fourths of my market value, absolved me from all obligation, in my opinion, to pay him any more, or to continue in a position which exposed me to his machinations. I determined to make my escape to Canada, about which I had heard something as beyond the limits of the United States. Tho' notwithstanding there were five states in the Union, I felt that I should be safer under an entirely foreign jurisdiction. The slave states had their emissaries in the others, & I found that I might fall into their hands, need a stronger protection than might be afforded me by public opinion in the northern states at that time. [It was not without long thought on the subject that I disposed of my property, & made a plan of escape, but

When I had fully made up my mind, I communicated my intention

to my wife, who was too much terrified by the dangers of the attempt to do any thing, at first, but entreat to depart from it, & by to make me contented with my condition as it was. In vain I explained to her the liability we were in of being separated from our children as well as from each other; represented every argument which had weighed with my own mind, & had at last decided me. She had not gone through my trials, & remain timidity occasion her horror of the evils she had experienced. I argued the matter with her, at various times till I was at last convinced that argument alone would not prevail, & then I said to her, very deliberately, that though it was a cruel thing for me to part with her, yet I would do it, & take all the children with me but the youngest, rather than run the risk of forcible separation from them all, & of a much worse captivity besides, which we were constantly exposed to here. She wept & entreated, but found I was resolute, & after a whole night spent in talking over the matter I left her to go to my work for the day. I had not gone far when I heard her voice calling

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me; — I waited till she came up to me, & then; finding me as determined as ever, she said, at last, she would go with me. It was an immense relief to [illegible] my nerves, my tears flowed as fast as hers had done before. I rode off with a heart a good deal lighter. The was living, at the time, near the landing I have mentioned, for the plantation extended the whole five miles from the house to the river, & there were several different farms, all of which I was overseeing, & thus often riding about from one to another every day. The oldest boy was at the house with Martha Ann, the rest were all with her. The consent was given on Thursday morning, & on the night of the following Saturday I had decided to set out, as it would then be several days before I should be missed, & I should get a good start. Some time previously I had got my wife to make me a large knapsack, big enough to hold the two smallest children; & I had arranged it that she should lead the second boy, while the oldest was stout enough to go by himself, & to help me

carry the necessary food. I used to pack the little ones on my back, & an evening, after I had got through my day's work, shot round the cabin with them, & go some little distance from it, in order to accustom both them & myself to the task before us. At length the eventful night came. I went up to the house to ask leave to take home with me Tom, that he might have his clothes mended. No objection was made, & I bade Master Amos "good night" for the last time. It was about the middle of September, & by nine o'clk. in the evening, all was ready. It was a dark, moonless night, & we got into the little skiff, while I had induced a fellow slave to take us across the river. It was an agitating & solemn moment. The good fellow, who was rowing us over, said this business might end in his death; "but," said he, "you will not be brought back alive, will you?" "Not if I can help it," I answered. "And if you are overpowered & taken", he asked, "will you conceal my part in the business?" "That I will, so help me God." "Then I am easy", he answered,

"wish you success." We landed on the Indiana shore, & I began to feel that I was my own master. But in what circumstances of fear & misery still! We were to travel by night, rest by day, in the woods & bushes. We were thrown absolutely upon our own poor & unaided resources, & were to rely on our own strength alone. The population was not so numerous as now, nor so well disposed to the slave. We dared look to no one for help. But my courage was equal to the occasion, & we trudged on cautiously & steadily, & as fast as the darkness, & the feebleness of my wife & boys would allow. It was nearly a fortnight before we reached Cincinnati, & a day or two previous to getting there, our provisions were used up, & I had the misery to hear the cry of hunger & exhaustion from those I loved so dearly. It was necessary to run the risk of exposure by day light upon the road; so I sprung upon it boldly from our hiding place one morning, & turned towards the south, to prevent the suspicion of my going the other way. I approached the first house I saw,

asked if they would sell me a little bread & meat. No, they had nothing for black fellows. At the next I succeeded better, but had to make as good a bargain as I could, & that was not very successful, with a man who wanted to see how little he could give me for my goods. I got a dollar.* The food which I bought, such as it was, but new life & strength into my wife & children when I got back to them again, & we at length arrived safe at Cincinnati. There we were kindly received & entertained for several days, my wife & little ones were refreshed, & then we were carried on our way thirty miles in a wagon. II^D We followed the same course as before, of travelling by night, & resting by day, till we arrived at the Scioto, where we had been told we should strike the military road of General Hull, in the last war with Great Britain, & might then safely travel by day. We found the road, accordingly, by the large sycamore & elm which marked its beginning & entered upon it with fresh spirits early in the day. Nobody had told us that it was cut through the wilderness, & I had neglected to provide

* We soon as I had succeeded in making a bargain, & procured the food, while I was out of sight, my wife & children were carried on their way in the wagon, & I overtook them after travelling on foot about 3 miles.

any food, thinking we should soon come to some habitation, where we could be supplied. But we travelled on all day without seeing one, & laid down at night hungry & weary enough. In the morning we were as hungry as ever, but had nothing to relieve our appetites but a little piece of dried beef. I divided this all round, & then started for a second day's trip in the wilderness. It was a hard trial, & this day is a memorable one in my life. The road was rough, of course, being neglected, & the logs lying across it constantly; the underbrush was somewhat cleared away; that was about all to mark the track. As we went wearily on, I was a little ahead of my wife & the boys, when I heard them call to me, & turning round, saw that my wife had fallen over a log, & was prostrate on the ground. "Mother's dying", cried Tom; & when I reached her, it seemed really so. She had fainted. I did not know but it might be fatal, & was half distracted with the fear & the uncertainty. In a few minutes, however, she recovered

I thought I heard the howlings of wolves, & the terrors inspired by this thought, & the excitement I was obliged to exert to keep them off, as well as much more to be feared, took away all power of sleeping; & the day light, & breakfast, & start were welcome.

sufficiently to take a few mouthfuls of the beef, & this, with a little rest, revived her so much that she bravely set out once more. We had not gone far, & I suppose it was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when we discerned some persons approaching us at no great distance. We were instantly on the alert, as we could hardly expect them to be friends. The advance of a few paces shewed me they were Indians, with packs on their shoulders; & they were so near that if they were hostile, it would be useless to try to escape. So I walked along boldly, till we came close upon them. They were bent down with their burdens, & had not raised their eyes till now; & when they did so, & saw me coming towards them, they looked at me in a frightened sort of way for a moment, & then, setting up a hideous howl, turned round & ran, as fast as they could. There were those or four of them, & what they were afraid of I could not imagine, unless they supposed I was the Devil, whom they had perhaps heard of as black. But even then one would have

thought my wife & children might be here, restrained them. However, there was no doubt they were well frightened, & we heard their wild & prolonged howl as they ran, for a mile or more. My wife was alarmed too, & thought they were merely running back to collect more of a party, & then to come & murder us. She wanted to turn back & I told her they were numerous enough to do that, if they wanted to, without him; & that as for turning back, I had quite too much of the road behind us, & that it would be a ridiculous thing, that both of our hosts should run away. If they were disposed to run, I would follow.

We did follow on, & soon the noise was stopped; & as we advanced we could discern Indians peeping at us from behind the trees, & dodging out of our sight, if they thought we were looking at them. Presently we came upon their wigwams, & saw a fine looking, stately Indian with his arms folded, waiting for us to approach. He was apparently the Chief, & saluting us civilly, he soon discovered that we were human beings, & spoke to his young men, who were scattered

about, & made them come in, & in spite
their foolish fears. And now curiosity seemed
to prevail. Each one wanted to touch
the children, who were shy as partridges, with
their long life in the woods; & as they shrunk
away, & uttered a little cry of alarm, the Indian
would jump back, as if he thought they
would bite him. However, a little while
sufficed to make them understand what we
were, & whither we were going, & what we
needed; & as little, to set them about supplying
our wants, feeding us bountifully, & giving us
a comfortable wigwam for our night's rest.

The next day we resumed our march, & found,
from the Indians, that we were only about twenty
five miles from the Lake. They sent some of
their young men to point out the place where
we were to turn off, & parted from us with as
much kindness as possible. [illegible] The night was
passed in the woods, & in the course of the
next forenoon we came out upon the ex-
tensive plain without trees which lies south
west of Sandusky City. We saw the houses
of the village, & kept away from them for the

* In passing over the ground in this neighborhood we came to a spot covered by a thicket, where Mr. Crane, accompanied with the boys & a sounding pole, & Indian guide, succeeded in getting them all safely across, where the depth was 100 & 150 yards wide, & the deepest part [illegible] not [illegible] in the middle.

resent, till I should have an opportunity to reconnoitre a little. When about a mile from the lake I hid my companions in the bushes, & hushed forward. Before I had gone far, I observed on the left, on the opposite side from the town, something which looked like a house between & a wharf which a number of men were rapping & unloading with activity. I promptly decided to approach them; & as I drew near, I was hailed by one of the number, who asked me if I wanted to work. I told him yes, & it was scarcely a minute before I had hold of a bag of corn, which, like the rest, I emptied into the hold of the vessel lying at anchor a few rods off. I got into the line, next to the only colored man I saw engaged, & soon entered into conversation with him; in the course of which I inquired of him where they were going, the best route to Canada, who was the Captain, & other particulars interesting to me, & communicated to him where I came from, & whither I wished to go. He soon told the captain, who called me on one side, & by his frank look & manner soon induced me to acknowledge my condition & purpose. I found I had not mistaken him. He sympathized with me, at once, most heartily; & offered to take

me & my family to Buffalo, whither they were bound, & where they might arrive the next evening, if the favorable wind continued, of which they were hurrying to take advantage. Never did men work with a better will; & soon two or three hundred bushels were thrown on board, the hatches were fastened down, the anchor raised & the sails hoisted. The captain had agreed to send a boat for me, after sundown, rather than take me on board at the landing; as there were Kentucky spies, on the watch for me at Sandusky, who might get a glimpse of me, if I brought my party out of the bush by daylight. I watched the vessel as she left her moorings with intense interest, & began to fear that she would go without me; after all; & she stretched off to so great a distance, as it seemed to me, before she rounded to. At length, however, I saw her come up to the wind, & lower a boat for the shore; & in a few minutes my black friend & two sailors jumped out upon the beach. They went with me immediately, to bring my wife & children. But what was my alarm & distress when I came back to the place where I had left them, & find they had gone! For a moment my fears were overpowering; but I soon discerned them in the fading twilight, at no great distance. My wife

had been alarmed by my long absence, & thought I must have been discovered by some of our watchful enemies, & had given up all for lost. Her fears were not removed by seeing me returning with three other men; & she tried to hide herself. It was not without difficulty that I satisfied her all was right, for her agitation was so great that she could not, at once, understand what I said. However, this was soon over, & the kindness of my companions facilitated the matter very much.

Before long, we were all on the way to the boat, & it did not require much time or labor to embark our luggage. A short row brought us to the vessel, & to my astonishment, we were welcomed on board with three hearty cheers; for the crew were as much pleased as the Captain, with the help they were giving us to escape. A fine run brought us to Buffalo the next morning, but it was too late to cross the river that night. The next morning we dropped down to Black Rock, & the friendly captain, whose name I have gratefully remembered as Captain Burnham, put us on

board the ferry boat to Waterloo, paid the passage money, & gave me a dollar at parting. He was a Scotchman, & had done enough to win my enduring gratitude, to prove himself a kind & generous man, & to give me a pleasant association with his dialect & his country.

When I got on the Canada side, on the morning of the 20th of October, 1830, my first impulse was to throw myself on the ground, & giving way to the riotous exultation of my feelings, to execute sundry antics which excited the astonishment of those who were looking on. A gentleman of the neighborhood, Col. Warren, who happened to be present, thought I was in a fit, & as he inquired what was the matter with the poor fellow, I jumped up & told him I was free. "Oh", said he, with a hearty laugh, "is that it? I never knew freedom make a man roll in the sand before." It is not much to be wondered at that my certainly, of being free was not quite a sober one at the first moment, & I hugged & kissed my wife & children all round, with a vivacity which made them laugh as well as myself. There was not

much time to be lost, though, in frolic, even at this extraordinary moment. I was a stranger, in a strange land, had to look about me at once, for refuge & resource. I found a lodging for the night, & the next morning set about exploring the interior for the means of support. I knew nothing about the country, or the people; but kept my eyes & ears open, & made such inquiries as opportunity afforded. I heard, in the course of the day, of a Mr. Hibbard, who lived some six or seven miles off, & who was a rich man, as riches were counted there, with a large farm, & several small tenements on it, which he was in the habit of letting to his laborers. To him I went, immediately, though the character given him by his neighbors was not, by any means, unexceptionably good. But I thought he was not probably any worse than those I had been accustomed to serve, & that I could get along with him, if honest & faithful work would satisfy him. In the afternoon I found him, & soon struck a bargain with him for employment. I asked him if there was any house where he would let me live. He said yes, & led the way to an old two story sort of

shanty, into the lower story of which the pigs had broken, & had apparently made it their resting place for some time. Nice it was a house, & I forthwith expelled the pigs, & set about cleaning it for the occupancy of a better sort of tenants. With the aid of hoe & shovel, hot water & a mop, I got the floor into a tolerable condition by midnight, early then did I not from my labor. The next day I brought the rest of the Hewsons to my house, & though there was nothing there but bare walls & floors, we were all in a state of great delight; & my old woman laughed, acknowledged that it was worth while, & that it was better than a log cabin with an earth floor. I begged some straw of Mr. Hibbard, & confining it by logs in the corners of the room, I made beds of it three feet thick, upon which we reposed luxuriously after our long fatigues.

Another trial awaited me which I had not anticipated. In consequence of the great exposures we had gone through, my wife & all the children fell sick; & it was not without extreme peril that they escaped with their lives.

My employer soon found that my labor was of more value to him than that of those he was accustomed to hire, and I consequently gained his favor, & his wife took quite a fancy to mine, we soon procured some of the comforts of life, while the necessaries of food & fuel were abundant. I remained with Mr. Hibbard three years, sometimes working on shares, & sometimes for wages; & I managed in that time to procure some pigs, a cow, & a horse. Thus my condition gradually improved, & I felt that my toils & sacrifices for freedom had not been in vain. Nor were my labors for the improvement of myself & others in more important things than food & clothing, without effect. It so happened that one of my Maryland friends arrived in this neighborhood, & hearing of my being here, inquired if I ever preached now, & spread the reputation I had acquired elsewhere, for my gifts in the pulpit. I had said nothing myself, & had not intended to say anything, of my having ever officiated in that way. I went ~~quietly~~ to meeting with others, when I had an opportunity, & enjoyed the quiet of the Sabbath when there was no assembly. I would not refuse to labor in

this field, however, when desired to do so;
+ I hope it is no violation of modesty to state
the fact that I was frequently called upon,
not by blacks alone, but by all classes in my
vicinity, the comparatively educated, as well as
the lamentably ignorant, to speak to them on
their duties, responsibilities, & immortality, on
their obligations to their Maker, their Saviour, &
themselves." It may, may, I am aware it must,
seem strange to many that a man so ignorant
as myself, unable to read, & having heard so
little as I had of religion, natural or revealed,
should be able to preach acceptably, to persons
who had enjoyed greater advantages than myself.
I can explain it only by reference to our Saviour's
comparison of the kingdom of Heaven to a plant
which may spring from a seed no bigger than a
mustard seed, & may yet reach such
a size that the birds of the air may take
shelter therein. Religion is not so much knowledge
as wisdom; — observation upon what passes without,
reflection upon what passes within a man's heart,
will give him a larger growth in grace than
is imagined by the devoted adherents of creeds,

or the confident followers of Christ, who call him Lord, Lord, but do not the things which he says. — Mr. Hibbard was good enough to give my oldest boy, Tom, two quarters schooling, to which the schoolmaster added more of his own kindness, so that my boy learned to read fluently & well. It was a great advantage, not only to him, but to me; for I used to get him to read much to me in the Bible, especially on Sunday mornings when I was going to preach; & I could easily commit to memory a few verses, or a chapter, from hearing him read it over. One beautiful summer Sabbath I rose early, & called him to come & read to me. "Where shall I read, father?" "Any where, my son," I answered, for I knew not how to direct him. He opened upon the Old Testament 103d Psalm, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, & all that is within me bless his holy name," & as he read this beautiful outpouring of gratitude & praise, which I now first heard! my heart melted within me. I recalled with all the rapidity of which thought is capable, the whole current of my life, & as I remembered the dangers & afflictions from which the Lord had delivered me, not & compared my present condition with what it had been

only my heart but my eyes overflowed, & I could neither check nor conceal the emotion which overpowered me. The words, "Bless the Lord, O my soul," with which the Psalm begins & ends, were all I needed, to express the fulness of my thankful heart. When he had finished, I could not, read the Psalm. Father turned to me & asked, "Father, who was David?" He had observed my excitement, & added, "He writes pretty, don't he?" Father repeated his question. It was a question I was utterly unable to answer. I had never heard of David, but could not bear to acknowledge my ignorance to my own child. So I answered evasively, "He was a man of God, my son." "I suppose so," said he, "but I want to know something more about him. Where did he live? What did he do?" As he went on questioning me, I saw it was in vain to attempt to escape, so I told him frankly, I did not know. "Why, Father," said he, "can't you read?" This was a worse question than the other, & if I had any pride in me at the moment, it took it all out of me pretty quick. It was a direct question, & must have a direct answer, so I told him at once I could

not." "Why not," said he. "Because I never had an opportunity to learn, nor any body to teach me." "Well, you can learn now, father." "No, my son, I am too old, & have not time enough. I must work all day, or you would not have enough to eat." "Then you might do it at night." "But still, there is nobody to teach me. I can't afford to pay any body for it, & of course no one can do it for nothing." "Why, father, I'll teach you. I can do it, I know. And then you'll know so much more, that you can talk better, & preach better." The little fellow was so earnest there was no resisting him; but it is hard to describe the conflicting feelings within me at such a proposition from such a quarter. I was delighted with the conviction that my children would have advantages I had never had, never enjoyed; but it was no slight mortification to think of being instructed by a child of twelve years old. Yet ambition, & a true desire to learn, for the good it would do my own mind, conquered the shame, & I agreed to try. But I did not make this state of

mind instantly. I was greatly moved by the conversation I had had with Tom, — so much so that (65 F. 5 Pasted) did not undertake to preach that day. [The congregation was disappointed, the & I passed Sunday in solitary reflection, in the woods. I was too much engrossed with the multitude of my thoughts within me to return home to dinner, & spent the whole day in secret meditation & prayer, trying to compose myself, & ascertain my true position. It was not difficult to see that my predicament was one of profound ignorance, & that I ought to use some diligence & endeavour to remove it. I began to take lessons of Tom, therefore, immediately & followed it up, every evening, by the light of a pine knot, or some thicker bark, which was the only light I could afford. Weeks passed, & my progress was so slow that poor Tom was almost discouraged, & used to drop asleep sometimes, & shine a little over my dunces, & talk to me very much as a school master talks to a stupid boy, till I began to be afraid that my age, my want of practice

in looking at such little scratches, the only fatigue, & the dim light, would be effectual preventives of me ever acquiring the art of reading. But Sam's perseverance & mine conquered at last, & in the course of the winter I did really learn to read a little. It was, & has been ever since, a great comfort to me to have made this acquisition; though it has made me comprehend with terrible clearness the ignorance in which I had been plunged all my previous life. It made me also feel more deeply & bitterly the oppression under which I had toiled & groaned, but the crushing & cruel nature of which I had not appreciated, till I found out, in some slight degree, from what I had been debarred. At the same time it made me more anxious than before to do something for the rescue & the elevation of those who were suffering the same evils I had endured, & who did not know how degraded & ignorant they really were. — After about three years had passed, I improved my condition again by taking service with a gentleman by the name of Riseley, whose residence was only a few miles

distant; & who was a man of more elevation of mind than Mr. Ribband, & of superior abilities. ~~Mr. Ribband~~ At his time I began to reflect more & more upon the circumstances of the blacks, who were already somewhat numerous in this region. I was not the only one who had escaped from the States, & had settled on the first spot in Canada which they had reached. Several hundreds of colored persons were in the neighborhood; & in the first joy of their deliverance, were going on in a way which, I could see, led to little or no progress in improvement. They were content to have the proceeds of their labor at their own command, & had not the ambition, nor the perception of what was within their easy reach, if they did but know it. They were generally working for hire upon the lands of others, & had not yet dreamed of becoming independent proprietors themselves. It soon became my great object to awaken them to a sense of the advantages which offered themselves to their grasp; & Mr. Ripley, seeing clearly the justness of my views, & willing to cooperate with me in the attempt to make them generally known among the blacks, permitted me to call meetings at

his house; & those who were known to be among the most intelligent & successful of our class. At these meetings we considered & discussed the subject, till we were all of one mind; & it was agreed, among the ten or twelve of us who assembled at them, that we would invest our earnings in land, undertake the task, which taught us light we certainly, would yet soon reward us for our effort, & settling upon wild lands which we could call our own; & when every tree which we felled, & every bushel of corn we raised, would be for ourselves; in other words, where we could secure all the profits of our own labor. The advantages of this course need not be dwelt upon, in a country which is every day exemplifying it, & has done so for two hundred years & more; & has by this very means, acquired an indestructible character for energy, enterprize, & self-reliance. It was precisely the Yankee spirit which I wished to instil into my fellow slaves, if possible; & I was not deterred from the task by the perception of the immense contrast in all the habits & characters generated by long ages of freedom & servitude, activity & sloth, inde-

specialties

pendence & subjection. My [illegible] agreed with me, & was anxious to select some spot among the many offered to our choice, where we would colonize & raise our own crops, eat our own bread, & be, in short, on our own masters. I was deputed to explore the country, & fix on a place to which I would be willing to migrate myself; & they all said they would go with me wherever such a one should be found. I set out accordingly in the autumn of 1834, & travelled on foot all over the extensive region between Lakes Ontario, Erie, & Huron. When I came to the territory east of lake St. Clair, & Detroit River, I was strongly impressed with its fertility, its convenience, indeed its superiority, for our purposes, to any other spot I had seen. I determined this should be the place; & so reported, on my return, to my future companions. They were wisely cautious however, & sent me off again in the summer, that I might see it at the opposite season of the year, & be better able to judge of its advantages. I found no reason to change my opinion, but upon going further towards the head of lake Erie, I discovered an extensive tract

of government land, which for some years had been granted to a Mr. McConnick upon certain conditions, which he had rented out to settlers upon such terms as he could obtain. This land being already cleared, offered some advantages for the immediate raising of crops, which were not to be overlooked by persons whose resources were so limited as ours; & we determined to go there first, for a time, & with the proceeds of what we could earn there, to make our purchases in Dawn afterwards. This plan was followed, & some dozen, or more, of us, settled upon these lands the following spring, & accumulated something by the crops of wheat & tobacco we were able to raise. — I discovered, before long, that Mr. Connick had not complied with the conditions of his grant, & was not, therefore, entitled to the rent he exacted from settlers. I was advised by Sir John Cockburn, to whom I applied on the subject, to appeal to the Legislature for relief. We did so; & though Mr. Connick was able, by the aid of his friends, to defeat us for one year, yet we succeeded the next, upon a second appeal, & were freed from all rent, thereafter, so long as we remained. Still,

this was not our own land. The government, though it demanded no rent, might set up the land for sale at any time, & then we should, probably, be driven off by wealthier purchasers, with the entire loss of all our improvements, & with no retreat provided. It was manifest that it was altogether better for us to purchase before competition was invited; & we kept this fully in mind during the time we staid here. We remained in this position six or seven years; & all this while the colored population was increasing rapidly around us, & spreading very fast into the interior settlements & the large towns. The immigration from the United States was incessant; & some, I am not unwilling to admit, were brought hither with my knowledge & connivance. I was glad to help such of my old friends as had the spirit to make the attempt to free themselves; & I made more than one trip, about this time, to Maryland & Kentucky, with the expectation, in which I was not disappointed, that some might be enabled to follow in my footsteps. I knew the route pretty well, & had much greater facilities for travelling than when I came

out of that Egypt for the first time.

I did not find that our prosperity increased with our numbers. The new delight the slave took in his freedom rendered him, at first, contented with a lot far inferior to that which he might have attained. Then his ignorance led him to make unprofitable bargains, & he would often hire land on short terms, & bind himself to clear a certain number of acres; & by the time they were cleared & fit to raise a good crop, his lease was out, & his landlord would come in, raise a splendid crop on the new land, & the tenant would, very likely, start again on just such another bargain, & be no better off at the end of ten years than he was at the beginning. Another way in which they lost the profits of their labor, was by raising nothing but tobacco, the high price of which was very tempting, the cultivation of which was a monopoly in their hands, as no white man understood it, or could compete with them at all. The consequence was, however, that they had nothing but tobacco to sell; there was rather too much of it in the market, & the price of wheat rose, while that commodity was depressed, & they lost all they would have saved, in the profit they gave the trader for his corn & stores. I saw the effect

of these things so clearly that I could not help trying to make my friends & neighbors see it too; & I set seriously about the business of lecturing upon the subject of crops, wages, & profits, as if I had been brought up to it. I insisted on the necessity of their raising their own crops, saving their own wages, & securing the profits of their own labor, with such plain arguments as seemed to me, & were as clear to their comprehension as to mine. I did this very openly; & frequently my audience consisted in part of the very traders whose inordinate profits upon individuals I was trying to diminish, but whose balance of profit would not be ultimately ~~expended~~ lessened, because they would have so many more persons to trade with who would be able to pay them a reasonable advance in cash, or its equivalent, on all their purchases. The point is a tender part of the system; but I handled it so gently, that the sensibilities portion of my natural opponents were not, I believe, offended; while those whom I wished to benefit, saw, for the most part, the propriety of my advice, & took it. At last, there are now great numbers of settlers, in this region of Canada, who own their farms, & are training up their children in true independence, & giving them a good elementary education, who had not taken

a single step towards such a result before I began to talk to them.

I said none of the respectable traders were offended with me; but one man had the folly to arrest me for a small debt, under the pretence that I was about to leave the county, when I was only going in the spring to Detroit for a few days, leaving my crops on the ground, & all my family at home but one little girl who was to go to school for a few weeks. It was so absurd, however, that I was soon released by some of my friends, of whom I had many among the whites as well as the blacks.

While I remained at Colchester I became acquainted with a Congregationalist Methodist missionary from Massachusetts, by the name of Hiram Wilson, who took an interest in our people, & was disposed to do what he could to promote the cause of improvement which I had so much at heart. He co-operated with me in many efforts, & I have been associated with him from 1836 to the present time. He has been a particular friend & [illegible] Among other things which he did for us, he wrote to a Quaker friend of his, an Englishman by the name of Jas. C. Fuller, at Skaneateles, N. Y. endeavored to interest him in the welfare of our struggling population.

& this contains his impressions & views of some of our colony.

We succeeded so far that Mr. Fuller, who was going on a visit to England, promised to do what he could among his friends there to induce them to aid us. He came back with $1,500 which had been subscribed for our benefit. It was a great question how this sum, which sounded vast to many of my brethren, should be appropriated. I had my own opinion, pretty decidedly made up, as to what it was best for us all to do with it. But in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion, the first thing to be done was to call a convention of delegates from every settlement of blacks that was within reach; that all might see that whatever was decided on was sanctioned by the disinterested votes of those who were thought by their companions best able to judge what was expedient. Mr. Wilson & I called such a convention, therefore, to meet in London, Upper Canada, & it was held in June 1830. I urged the appropriation of the money to the establishment of a manual labor school, where our children could be taught those rudiments of knowledge which are usually the occupations

of a Grammar School; where the boys could be taught, in addition, the practice of some mechanic art; & the girls could be instructed in those domestic arts which are the proper ornament occupation of their sex. Such an establishment would train up those who would afterwards instruct others; & would thus gradually become independent of the white man for our intellectual progress, as we might be also for our physical prosperity. It was the more necessary, as in many districts, owing to the insurmountable prejudices of the inhabitants, the children of the blacks were not allowed to share the advantages of the common school. There was some opposition in this room in the Convention; but in the course of the discussion, which continued for three days it appeared so obviously for the advantage of all parties that it was unanimously resolved to recommend this donation, so as to preserve it for a purpose of permanent utility, that the motion was at last unanimously adopted: & a committee of three was appointed to select & purchase a site for the establishment. Mr. Wilson & myself were the active members of

this committee, & after traversing the country for several months, we could find no place more suitable than that upon which I had had my eye for two or three years, for a permanent settlement, in the town of Dawn. We therefore bought two hundred acres of fine rich land on the Sydenham river, to, covered with a heavy growth of Black Walnut, & White Wood [illegible] at $4 the acre. I had made a bargain for two hundred acres adjoining this lot, on my own account; & circumstances favored me so that the man of whom I purchased was glad to let me have them at a large discount from the price I had agreed to pay, if I would give him cash for the balance I owed him. I transferred a portion of the advantage of this bargain to the institution, by selling to it one hundred acres more, at the low price at which I obtained them; & thus the school has three hundred acres of as fine land, and as well situated land, as Canada can show, at a very moderate cost. In 1842 I removed, with my family to Dawn, & as a considerable number of my friends are there about me, & the school is permanently

future
fixed there, the importance of this settlement seems
to be decided. There are many other settlements which are
considerable; indeed the colored population is
scattered over a territory, which does not fall
far short of three hundred miles in extent in
each direction, & probably numbers not less
than twenty thousand persons in all. We
look to the school, & the possession of landed
by individuals
property, as two great means of the elevation
of this our oppressed & degraded race to a participation
in the blessings, as they have hitherto been
only permitted to share only the miseries & vices
of civilization. My efforts to aid them, in
every way in my power, & to procure the
aid of others for them, have been constant.
I have made many journies into New York,
Connecticut, Massachusetts, & Maine, in all
of which States I have found or made
some friends to the cause, & I hope some
personal friends. I have received many
liberal gifts,
testimonials of kindness, & experienced much kindness
of treatment; but I must be allowed to allude
particularly to the donations received from

Boston, by which we have been enabled to erect a saw-mill, & thus to begin in good earnest, the clearing of our lands, & to secure a profitable return, for the support of our school, as among those which have been most welcome & valuable to us. I could give here a great many particulars, which would amuse & interest the reader, if they did not instruct him. But it is better not to indulge the inclination; & I will conclude my narrative by simply recording my gratitude, heartfelt & inexpressible, to God, & to many of my fellow men, for the vast improvement in my condition, both physical & mental; for the great degree of comfort with which I am surrounded; for the good I have been enabled to effect; for the light which has risen upon me; for the religious privileges I enjoy, & the religious hopes I am permitted to cherish; for the prospects opening to my children, so different from what they might have been; & finally for the cheering expectation of benefitting not only the present, but many future generations of my race. May the light of our Dawn

continue to spread, till "the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in his beams!"